



Focus

The Waste Not Washington Act

In 1989 the Washington Legislature passed ESHB 1671, a comprehensive solid waste bill that will bring about significant changes in the way Washington citizens handle their garbage. The bill calls for waste reduction and source separation to become the fundamental strategies of solid waste management and establishes an aggressive state goal to achieve a fifty percent recycling rate by 1995. Local governments will play a very important role in meeting this goal by including waste reduction and recycling elements in their comprehensive solid waste management plans. Other key provisions of the bill are outlined below.

Funding for the activities under the bill will be provided through a surcharge of one percent on solid waste collection. A family setting out one garbage can per week will pay a maximum of 96¢ per year. Those with two cans or more per week will pay up to \$1.44 per year. Counties may also impose a fee on collection services in unincorporated areas to pay for solid waste planning and administration expenses.

Waste Reduction and Recycling Elements of Local Plans

Local governments have been required to prepare solid waste management plans detailing how they will manage their garbage since the early 1970s. Now, cities and counties will be required to include waste reduction and recycling elements in their solid waste management plans written according to guidelines developed by the Department of Ecology. Curbside collection of recyclable materials will likely be required in most urban areas of the state. The plans must also address collection of recyclables in rural areas, monitoring of collection at nonresidential sites, and collection of yard wastes.

Waste Reduction and Recycling Education

A comprehensive statewide public information program to encourage waste reduction, source separation, and recycling will be developed by the Department of Ecology. Local governments must also conduct educational programs to inform residents how to reduce and recycle their wastes. The Department will provide grants to local governments to assist with their educational efforts.

Waste Composition/Recycling Survey

The Department of Ecology will conduct a yearly waste composition and recycling survey to track the progress toward meeting waste reduction and recycling goals. Washington was one of the first states in the nation to conduct waste stream analysis and will continue to lead the way in this regard.

Collection Authority for Recyclables

The bill clarifies under what circumstances a city, county, or the Utilities and Transportation Commission has the authority to arrange for the collection of recyclable materials. Haulers regulated by the UTC will be required to use rate structures which encourage waste reduction and recycling.

State Agency Waste Reduction and Recycling

State government will put additional emphasis on its own waste reduction and recycling program to ensure that all employees have the opportunity to participate in waste reduction and recycling at work. State agencies must also increase their use of recycled paper products by 50 percent.

School Recycling

Public schools will be required to implement waste reduction and recycling programs according to guidelines developed by the Department. Schools will be provided with an incentive to maximize waste reduction and recycling through a new awards program. Three awards of \$10,000 will be given each year to public schools in the state.